



**GLOBAL WELLNESS
INSTITUTE™**



Global Internship
Program

Excellence through Example

SURVEY REPORT

Experiential Learning Programs
Educational Establishments

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Executive Summary

Spa and wellness educational institutions across the globe were asked to participate in a survey to assess the current state of experiential learning programs and how they are being used within a broad spectrum of spa and wellness schools. Those hosting programs were asked about the spa and wellness education programs they offered, the format of the programs and the perceived value of the programs.

A total of 24 responses were received, 17 were usable. Experiential learning programs, for the purpose of this survey, were defined as internships, externships, manager-in-training programs and shadowing opportunities. The total number of respondents currently offering experiential learning (EL) opportunities was 8 (47% of sample). Of those that have spa and wellness programs but are not currently offering EL programs as part of the curriculum, 83% indicated that they were considering adding an EL program in the future. For these educational establishments, EL programs being considered are mainly to assist with student placement post-graduation and to enhance the student's well-rounded education.

Of the programs with experiential learning elements, the length of the program ranged from less than one year to four years. Of those that offer EL programs, 75% require an EL experience as part of their curriculum and 50% require four or more EL experiences. Most programs offer Internships (87.5%), followed by shadowing (37.5%), Externship, and Manager-in-Training. When asked the student's interest level, 78% noted students to be 'very interested' in experiential learning. The elements of spa and wellness EL programs rated to be of greatest value for students was 'well planned programs with clear objectives,' followed by 'operational exposure,' and 'relation to classroom values being taught.'

EL programs were perceived to be 'highly valuable' and to have a high correlation between EL experiences and student's performance post-graduation. All respondents agreed that employers value participation in experiential learning experiences when making hiring decisions. The most highly rated student 'take-aways' included 'career direction,' 'operational exposure' and 'exposure to a spa/wellness environment.'

Introduction

The spa industry is facing global workforce and education challenges due to increasing consumer demand. According to the 2014 *Global Spa & Wellness Economy Monitor*, the spa industry will need 2.7 million employees by 2018. An internship initiative was inspired by the ever-increasing worldwide need for spa management talent to have both the educational skills and the practical experience in order to be effective leaders.

With the goal of solving the very real industry challenge of attracting, supporting and educating people to the spa industry, it is the goal of Global Internship Program Committee (GIPC) to be a central contributor in answering to the needs of four primary groups: (1) **Spa and Wellness Management Education Programs** who need this component to enrich their core curriculum offerings, (2) **Spa and Wellness Management Students** who need the hands on experience to enhance their marketability and competitive advantage (3) **Potential Spa and Wellness Management Employers** who are looking for qualified candidates who can be developed efficiently to handle the ever increasing complexities of a Spa and Wellness Management career and (4) **Spa and Wellness Industry Professionals** looking for an opportunity to further their careers in the Spa and Wellness Management market.

This report has been developed to provide an overview of one of the tools utilized by the GIPC; a descriptive survey of educational institutions offering experiential learning as part of their spa management curriculum. This survey is intended to help us better understand how educational institutions with Spa and Wellness offerings use and benefit from experiential learning programs -- including Internships, Externships, Manager-in-Training, and Shadowing programs.

Methodology

A survey was developed by the Global Internship Program Committee (GIPC) to create resources for members of and those interested in the spa and wellness industry. The online survey focused on the current state of experiential learning in programs with a spa management focus.

Using targeted emails sent by the GIPC and the Global Wellness Institute, the survey was sent to over 200 global educational institutions that potentially had spa and wellness education programs. Links to the online survey were also posted on social media platforms. Professors and Program Directors or those who would have direct oversight of a potential program were asked to complete the survey.

Questionnaire topics included:

- Details of Existing Experiential Learning Programs
- Details of the Institution's Educational Program with Experiential Learning Elements
- Perceived Value of Experiential Learning Programs
- Potential Experiential Learning Programs

Using the SurveyMonkey platform, the committee reviewed the collected responses, removing any unusable data. Results were analyzed using Excel. Response data in this report is for all responses received as of December 4, 2015. The online survey will remain open to allow for additional data to be used in the creation of future publications. It is important to note that the reported results include only a small sample and cannot be generalized to represent the entire spa management education institution population.

Survey Results

A total of 24 responses were received, 17 were usable. Of the usable surveys, 35% were from the United States, 35% from Canada and the remainder (each with one response) were from the United Kingdom, Estonia, Germany, Barbados and one respondent noting their offering to be International. The total number of respondents currently offering experiential learning (EL) opportunities was 8 (47% of sample).

The responding institutions include:

- Conrad N. Hilton College
- Cornell School of Hotel Administration
- Florida Gulf Coast University
- Georgian College
- Niagara College
- PBHC School of Holistic Therapies Inc.
- University of Derby
- University of Tartu Pärnu College

Details of Existing Experiential Learning Programs

Forty-seven percent of survey respondents currently offer experiential learning (EL) programs for their students. Of those that offer EL programs, 75% require an EL experience as part of their curriculum, the remaining 25% programs were optional for students. Fifty percent require four or more EL experiences as part of their curriculum (Exhibit 1). Most programs offer internships (87.5%), followed by shadowing (37.5%) as the most frequent EL programs (Exhibit 2). Summer (87.5%) was the season most often noted for when programs offered EL opportunities, followed by fall, winter and spring (Exhibit 3). Fifty percent of the programs offered EL programs during all seasons and 25% offered programs only in the summer.

When asked the student's interest level, 78% noted students to be 'very interested' in experiential learning. Twenty-two percent noted interest to be 'neutral' and no respondents reported that students were 'not interested.' When asked the level of difficulty securing EL opportunities for students, 22% indicated the effort to be 'easy,' and 11% noted 'difficult.' The majority (67%) of respondents indicated the difficulty of their efforts to be 'neutral' (Exhibit 4). Elements of spa and wellness EL programs rated to be of greatest value for students was 'well planned programs with clear objectives,' followed by 'operational exposure,' and 'relation to classroom values being taught,' (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 1: If required, how many experiential learning experiences are required?



Exhibit 2: What type of experiential learning program(s) do you offer?

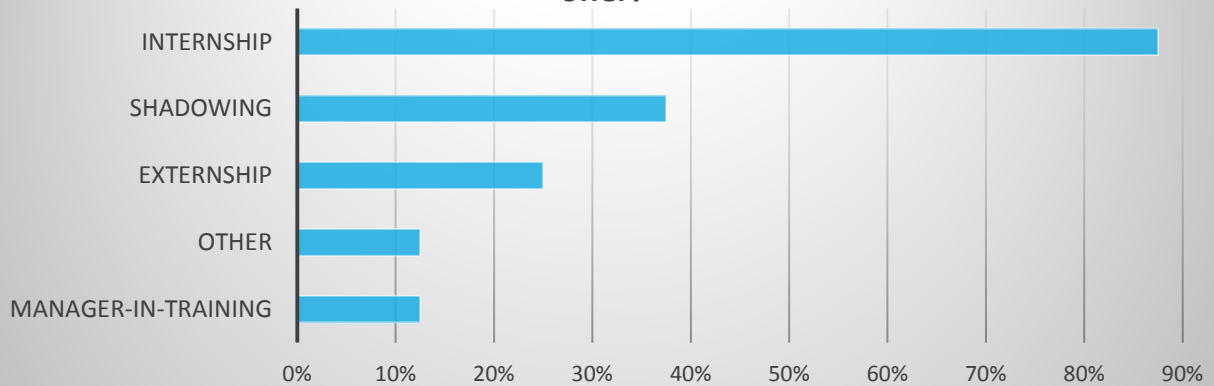


Exhibit 3: What time of year are your students available for placement?

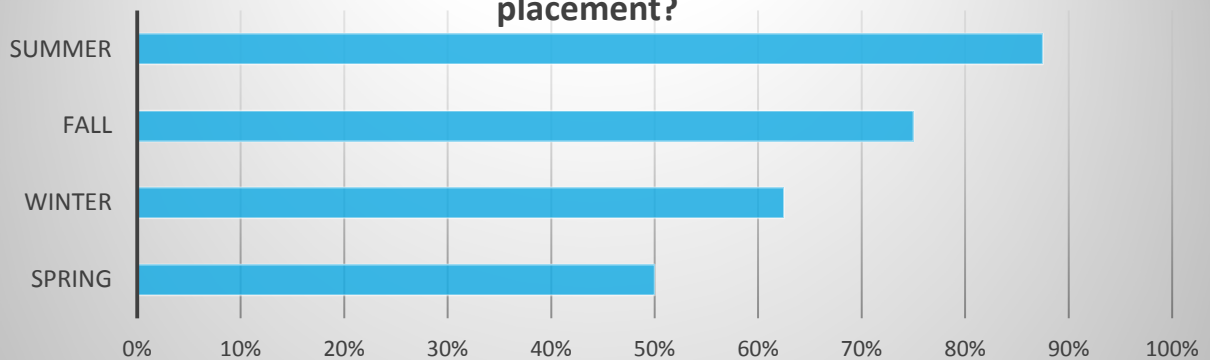
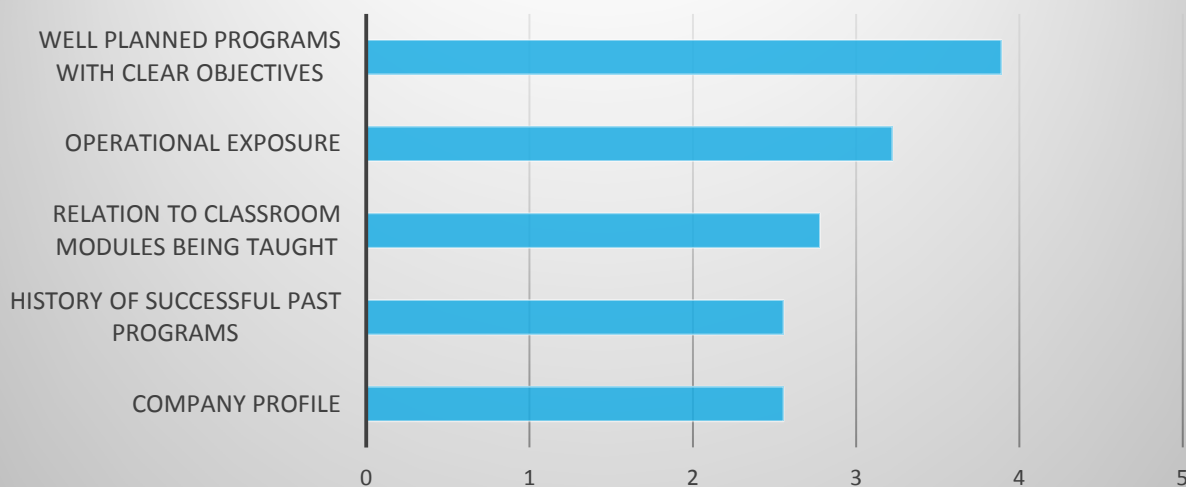


Exhibit 4: What is the level of difficulty in finding and securing experiential learning opportunities for your students?



**Exhibit 5: What are the most crucial components in experiential learning programs that create maximum value for your students?
Ranked on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being highest)**



Details of the Institution's Educational Programs with Experiential Learning Elements

Of the educational programs with experiential learning elements, the typical length of the program ranged from less than one year to four years. As shown in Exhibit 6, most programs were 2 or 4 years (37.5% each), followed by 3 year programs (12.5%) and those of less than 1 year (12.5%). Programs included Masters, Bachelors, Associates, Certificate and Diploma programs.

Size of spa management programs ranged from 22 – 150 with an average size of 68 students. Names of the programs varied and are included in Exhibit 7. All programs included the subjects of 'spa treatments/modalities' and 'origins/history of spa.' Other popular curricular topics included communication, guest relations/customer service, operation management, marketing, spa finance, spa design and human resources (Exhibit 8).

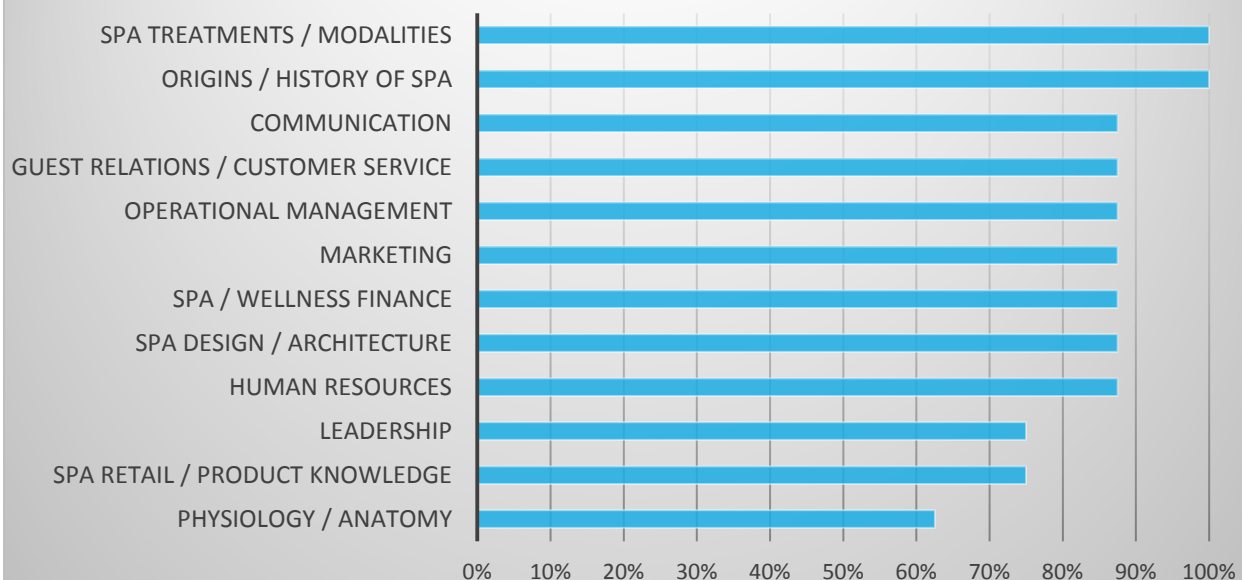
Exhibit 6: Typical length of educational program:



Exhibit 7: Name of major, degree program, or program element:

- Esthetician/Spa Management
- Resort Management
- MSC International Spa Management
- BSc Spa Management
- FD Spa Management
- ITEC courses; Spa/Wellness Management
- Esthetician Program - Diploma
- Medical Skin Care Therapist - Postgraduate Certificate
- BS (undergrad) and MMH (Masters)
- Wellness and Spa Service Design and Management
- Bachelor of Science Degree with Spa Management Concentration
- Hotel and Restaurant Management with Spa Emphasis

Exhibit 8: What subject matters do the students in your spa/wellness related majors, degree programs, or related elements learn?



Perceived Value of Experiential Learning Programs

Respondents were asked to appraise the value of their EL program. EL programs were perceived to be 'highly valuable' (89%) (Exhibit 9) and 89% also believed there to be a high correlation between EL experiences and student's performance post-graduation (Exhibit 10). Most highly rated student 'take-aways' included 'career direction,' 'operational exposure' and 'exposure to a spa/wellness environment' (Exhibit 11).

All survey respondents answered yes to the question "Do you think employers value participation in experiential learning experiences when making hiring decisions?" Ninety-three percent reported that students consider availability of experiential learning programs when selecting an educational program (one respondent indicated they don't know).

Exhibit 9: How valuable do your students feel their experiential learning opportunity was after its completion?

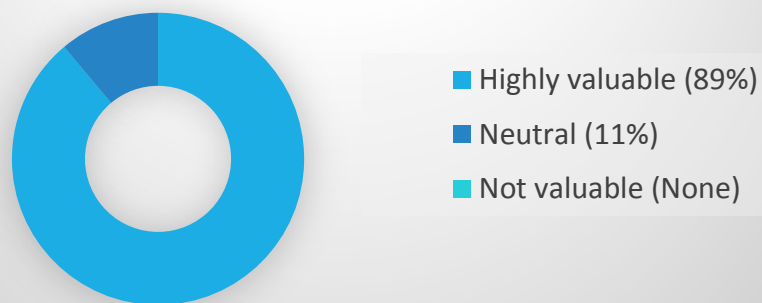


Exhibit 10: How much do you think experiential learning opportunities are positively correlated to students' performance post graduation?

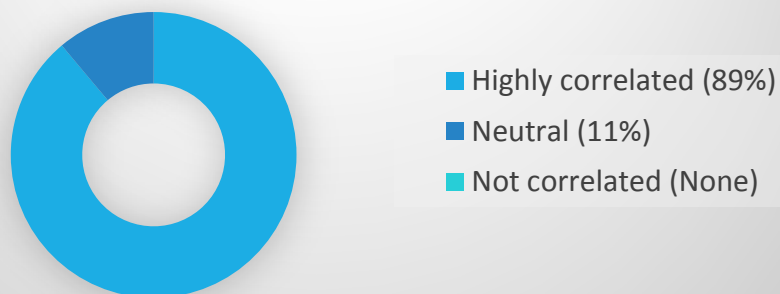
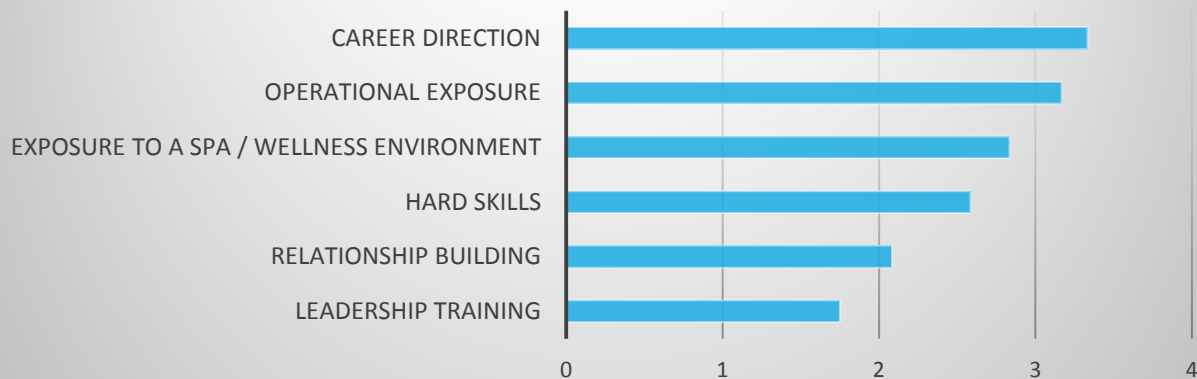


Exhibit 11: What are the students' most valuable "take-aways" from participating in the experiential learning program(s)?
Ranked from 1-6 (with 1 being most valuable)



Potential Experiential Learning Programs

Of those that are not currently offering EL programs, 83% indicated that they were considering adding an EL program in the future. Forty percent indicated the programs to be part of the curriculum within a year, the remaining 60% indicated it would be 'more than a year' before their program is implemented. All indicated their programs would be an option (not a requirement) for students.

Internships are the programs being considered most, followed by Manager-in-Training programs, Shadowing and Externships (Exhibit 12). EL programs are being considered mainly to assist with student placement post-graduation and to enhance the student's well-rounded education (Exhibit 13).

Exhibit 12: What types of experiential learning program(s) are being considered?

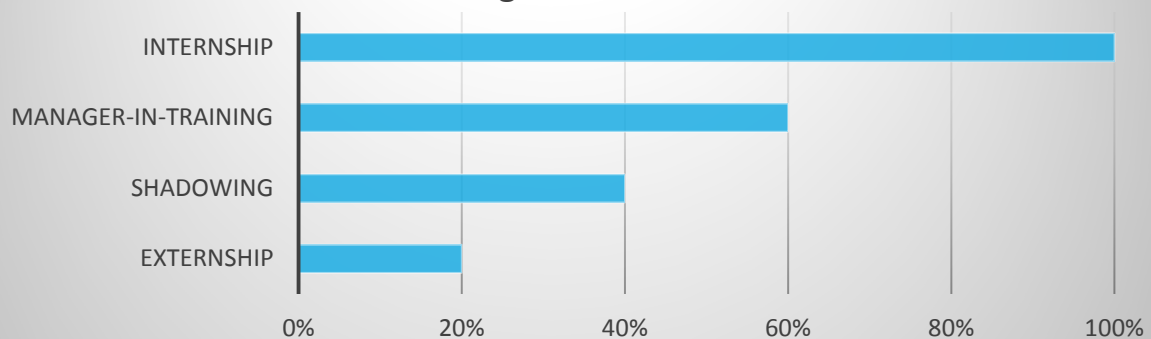
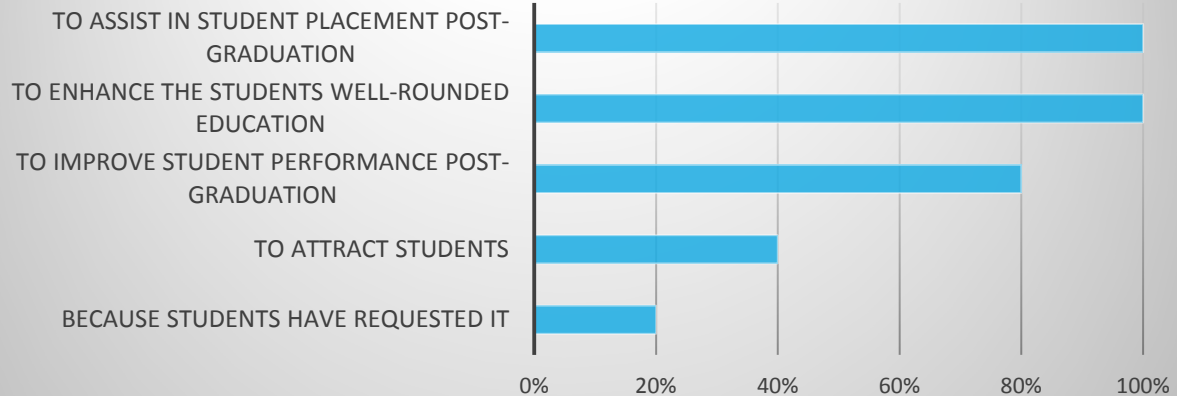


Exhibit 13: Why are you considering adding an experiential learning program?



Summary

Results of the study have provided a strong case for why spa and wellness educators should consider creating experiential learning programs for not only their own needs, but to answer to the needs of the global industry as a whole. The goal of this survey was to reveal details about current and future experiential learning programs in spa management education. The results of the study have provided details about select programs as well as opinions of those responsible for them. Due to the small sample size results cannot be generalized to the greater population, however, it is the hope of the committee that by publishing this preliminary report, other spa management educational program leaders will be enticed to share information about their programs.

The Global Internship Programs' objectives are to provide our industry with complimentary resources and sources, including two Survey Reports, of which this is one of; a newly developed manual titled 'Global Best Practices for the Spa and Wellness Industry', as well as additional tools to assist companies in establishing experiential learning programs within their schools and businesses. Our main future objective is to create a website portal where spa management students and industry professionals can easily connect with available spa and wellness experiential learning programs. If you supervise a spa management program and would be interested in completing the survey, please email kate@spaandwellnesscareers.com.

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